

GROUP INSTRUCTIONS:

In your groups you are to answer the questions below about your selected poem. You will have no more than ten minutes, so you can only work with each question for about 3 minutes! You will need a scribe to complete a paper copy of your group's answers. Turn in these answers with the names of all group members. Group members will be called at random to lead our large-group follow-up discussion, so you should be prepared to report on your group's discussion and answers to all the questions about your chosen poem. Be sure to answer each question as fully as possible.

“From my passing car I see in the cemetery”

1. Explain the use of the bed as an extended metaphor in the poem.
2. In the second sentence of the poem, lines 8-11, the speaker alludes to Egyptian sarcophagi and to the story of Odysseus in the underworld. What is the effect of these allusions?
3. In the final sentence of the poem, lines 13 to 21, the speaker imagines and describes in detail the skeletal remains of the two parents. This section may strike some readers as macabre. What could you respond as to the value or purpose of this section or as to why a child would reflect in this way on the decaying bodies of beloved parents?

“In the First Hour of Your Life”

1. Find examples of sound effects (alliteration, assonance, and consonance) in the first stanza.
2. The “gates of horn” in the second line of the second stanza are a classical allusion, referring to the gates of the underworld, the source of dreams and location of the afterlife. Why on earth would a grandmother think about the new grandbaby's passage through those gates, or the end its life? What is this thought combined with in the second stanza?
3. How does the third stanza tie back in with the previous poem?

“Sleeping in the Bed with Jake, my Three-Year-Old Grandson”

1. Trace the images of heat through the poem.
2. What do the images of fire and heat represent
3. The final sentence of the poem suggests that the flames may “speak” the name of the grandmother. Explain your understanding of these final lines.